



What's It Look Like?

Bridge 2 Independence Case Scenarios

*Project
EVERLAST*

Jesse

Jesse has been in care since 16 when his father became incarcerated. His mother had relinquished rights when Jesse was 5 due to her ongoing addiction. Jesse spent most of his childhood caring for his younger brother. Caring and doing for others continue to be strengths of Jesse's in his foster home. His foster parents are very involved and support of Jesse and wish to remain involved. A few months ago, Jesse reconnected with his mother via Facebook. As Jesse prepares to age-out, he's determined to get an apartment with his mother and her boyfriend. Jesse's mother does not work and often asks Jesse for money. Jesse's mother and her boyfriend, who Jesse has also befriended, both have extensive criminal histories. Jesse's team is very concerned about the appropriateness of his decision.

1. How might Jesse's team address their concern and help Jesse plan?

Athena

Athena is a sweet and shy young woman who has great insight into her needs. However, she struggles with severe social anxiety. The last time she attended court was when she was 15 and she testified in her parents' termination hearing. She attempted to attend court hearings after this, but would always have severe panic attacks the night before the hearing. She has utilized a staff member from her group home to speak for during team meetings by writing her notes during the meeting. She refused to participate in Bridge 2 Independence because of the court involvement; even though she qualifies due to her pet grooming job, and could use the housing stipend for the apartment she'll move into after she turns 19.

1. How might Athena's fear be addressed?
2. What strategies might an Independence Coordinator employ in meeting and working with Athena?

Stacy

Stacy entered care at age 12 with her two younger sisters due to abuse. She lived in four different foster homes before being placed with her current foster family at age 17. Parental rights were terminated allowing for Stacy's younger siblings to be adopted by a maternal aunt; however, Stacy did not have a good relationship with this aunt and did not want to be adopted or guardianshiped. She will age out of care at the end of the month. She is in the second semester of her senior year of high school, receives good grades, involved in volleyball and drama, and volunteers at the local animal shelter with her foster grandmother a couple times a month. She plans to study animal science at the local state university with the hopes of becoming a veterinarian. Stacy has attended most of her court hearings and team meetings. She has maintained a strong relationship with her caseworker since she took her case a year ago.

1. Stacy plans to live with her foster parents until she moves into the dorms this fall. Her Transitional Living Plan includes building money management skills. This has been difficult for Stacy since she has never had any money of her own. How might her housing assistance payment be utilized to develop this skill? What other resources/experiences may help Stacy with money management?

2. Stacy has not had contact with anyone from her biological family since she was 15, except for a few words with a maternal aunt (adoptive mother for her siblings) when she attends her siblings birthday parties and school activities. She feels most connected to her teachers, coaches and foster family. How could this be taken into account in supporting Stacy develop her team for permanency reviews?
3. Stacy is very worried about losing her current caseworker when she ages out and doesn't think her Independence Coordinator will care about or understand her. What could be done to put Stacy's mind at ease?
4. Stacy went to a party after prom where she drank (for the first time) and had to call her foster dad to pick her up because she could not drive. Stacy's maternal aunt heard about the incident and has become concerned about Stacy having a negative influence on her siblings. She wants to end visits. Stacy is very close with her siblings (10 year old brother, 12 year old sister and 17 year old sister). How might the Independence Coordinator work to support Stacy?

Maria

Maria entered care at 13. She moved through a few foster homes, group homes and residential facilities. She aged out of an independent living program in her community and immediately took advantage of Bridge 2 Independence program. She is doing well at college. She lives in the dorm and is working at the local hair salon as a receptionist. At her monthly meeting with her Independence Coordinator, Maria admits she is six-months pregnant and due early in the next academic semester. She has decided to take the spring semester off while she has her baby. This means Maria will have to live off campus when the semester ends next week.

1. Address the shift in Maria's housing situation.
2. While talking about her approaching parenthood with her Independence Coordinator, Maria talks about the last foster home she was in and the therapist she saw throughout her first three years in care. She describes how helpful they were and that "they'd know how to make me be a good mom". How could this information be helpful in addressing Maria's fear of being a good parent and lack of support system?
3. About a month after having her baby, the salon Maria's been working at closes. She is now neither enrolled in school nor working. She is submitting applications, but having a hard time finding a job that will hire her. The baby's father can only watch the baby for a few hours a day and Maria has a very limited support system. She babysits the neighbor's children a few hours a day to earn enough money for utilities and basic needs. She also has four months before fall semester starts and she can enroll in school. Maria is afraid she won't be able to find a job and will become ineligible for Bridge 2 Independence which would result her being unable to pay rent. How might you help Maria address these concerns and resolve her situation?

Donte

Donte entered care at 17 after struggling with truancy and a few stints on probation after his mother moves out of state while Donte is on a school trip. She cannot be found, leaving Donte abandoned. He has always been very particular about the people he trusts. Donte says, "I either click or I don't. If I don't, then there's no point in even

showing up to see me”. Donte keeps in close contact with his last probation officer and credits this officer with his successful completion of probation. Three months into the Bridge 2 Independence, it’s clear that Donte is not “clicking” with his Independence Coordinator, regardless of what the Independence Coordinator tries. Donte has requested a court review because he feels like he can’t get the support he needs with his current worker.

1. How might you handle Donte’s complaint?
2. Donte recently received an increase in hours at his job. Anticipating the increase in income, he spends his entire housing stipend on a new tattoo. He neglected to realize that this increase would be gradual and would only be about one shift a week. He is now unable to pay his rent. Donte calls his Independence Coordinator in a panic. How might you respond?

Jeff

Jeff entered care at age 10 following his mother’s incarceration. He moved from three foster homes until age 17. During his junior year of high school, Jeff began skipping school to spend time with older peers where he became involved in substance use. After several attempts by his caseworker and foster parents to get Jeff back into school, the county attorney filed truancy charges and Jeff “crossed over” to the juvenile justice system. Following several unsuccessful interventions, Jeff was moved to a treatment facility with an on-site school shortly before turning 18. Jeff built strong connections with the staff and his therapist which helped him overcome his addiction and earn his high school diploma. Six months prior to turning 19, Jeff moved into an Independent Living program where he remained until aging out.

Jeff was notified of his eligibility for Bridge 2 Independence, but insisted that he had everything handled. He chose to move in with a friend without entering the Bridge 2 Independence. About six months after aging out, Jeff and his friend have had a falling-out; he’s couch surfing, working random jobs and recently began a program through Workforce Development to find stable employment. He comes across a handout the independent living program gave him on his last day and decides to call the number listed.

1. Jeff is doing a great job of managing his housing stipend to support himself in his new, safe studio apartment that his Independence Coordinator helped him find. Jeff completed the employment program and has been working for a construction company where he’s gaining some significant carpentry skills. These were the two main goals Jeff and his Independence Coordinator were focusing on. What’s next?
2. One of his Jeff’s high school friends, with whom he used, begins working at the construction company. Unfortunately, Jeff starts spending a more time with this friend and falls back into his addiction. After missing several days of work, he loses his job. Jeff is at risk of becoming ineligible for the program. What steps could the Independence Coordinator take? What about the court?
3. Jeff has just turned 20 when he finds out that his girlfriend is pregnant. Being a father has always been a dream of Jeff’s. He reaches out to his Independence Coordinator and wants to get back into the program. What steps should/can the Independence Coordinator take?